

Gray House
County Road
Connersville Vicinity
Fayette County
Indiana

HABS No. IN-108

HABS
IND.
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. IND-108

GRAY HOUSE

Location: East side of County Road 650, two miles south of State Route 44. Connersville vicinity, Fayette County, Indiana.

USCS Alpine Quadrangle Map; Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.658560.4385260

Present Owner and Occupant: John M. Hoagland (Route 6, Connersville, Indiana, 47331).

Present Use: Residence.

Statement of Significance: The Gray House was built ca. 1836-46, and is more sophisticated in design and appearance than most of the local vernacular constructed during this period. The rectangular brick structure is distinguished by a symmetrical five-bay facade articulated by giant pilasters, a recessed central entrance framed by fluted Creek Doric columns in antis, and topped by a low gable roof trimmed with a wide denticulated entablature, punctuated at regular intervals by elaborate cast-iron grille openings. Hugh Gray came to Fayette County from Vermont in the late 1810s, settling here in the 30s, becoming a prosperous farmer in the area. The house remained in the Cray family for more than eighty years, and has been excellently maintained since it was erected in the early 19th century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: ca. 1836-46. Hugh Gray acquired the property in 1836, and according to family history, is the original owner and builder of the house.
2. Architect: The house may be architect-designed by a man by the name of Smith from New York State.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The structure stands upon the west half of the southwest quarter of Section 1 in Township 13 North, range 11E. The following deed references are in the Office of the Recorder, Fayette County Courthouse, Connersville, Indiana.

- 1836 Deed, January 2, 1836, recorded in Book H, page 254. David Steele sold the property to Hugh Gray.
- 1870 Deed, September 14, 1870, recorded in Book 2, page 398. Hugh Gray, Sr. and his wife Susannah sold the property to their son Hugh Gray, Jr. The property subsequently changed hands several times within the Gray family during the next eighty years. The last family member to own the property was Leslie Gray who had acquired it from his mother Minnie J. Gray Trebley.
- 1953 Deed, March 28, 1953, recorded in Book 22, page 280. Leslie R. Gray and his wife Emeline sold the property to Ozro and Anita Thompson.
- 1964 Deed, September 12, 1964, recorded in Book 45, page 347. Anita Thompson sold the land to John and Rubylea Houghland.
4. Original plan and construction: As originally constructed the house probably consisted of only the main one-and-a-half story block. Raised upon a stone foundation, the walls are constructed of brick and laid in common bond with headers every ninth course. The five-bay front facade is articulated by six full-length brick pilasters, defining each bay; both four-bay side facades are articulated by five pilasters. Around the roof line is a wooden entablature which consists of a thin band of dentils and a wide frieze with rectangular openings covered with cast-iron grilles spaced at regular intervals around the front and two side facades. Most of the grilles conceal blind panels, but those near the rear on the side elevations cover attic windows. The central entrance is a recessed porch framed by Greek Doric columns in antis which support a wide, plain entablature. A four-light fixed transom and sidelights surround the door. A low-pitched gable roof with the ridge running parallel to the front is framed at the ends with slightly pointed parapet walls. Four corner chimneys rise tall above the roof's surface.
5. Alterations and additions: The rear wing may be an early addition to the main block, but there is no definite break in the brick work at the intersection of the walls, so it is difficult to discern whether the rear section is an addition or continuation of the main block. Few changes have been completed on the interior, except for the probable removal of a partition wall in the first-floor left rear room, and the addition of some partition walls in the right rear of the first floor. Both fireplace hearths have had repair alterations completed.

B. Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Hugh Gray was an early settler in the Connersville area, coming here from Vermont. The family accumulated a substantial estate through farming, living in the Gray home for more than eighty years.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Fayette County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder,
Fayette County Courthouse, Connersville, Indiana.

Witt, Diane. "Robert Gray and his Descendants," n.p., n.d.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Connersville "News Examiner," December 3, 1949.

Peat, Wilbur. Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century.
Indianapolis, 1962, pp. 52, 40.

Prepared by Robert Brueggmann
Team Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1974

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Gray house, erected ca. 1836-46, is an excellent example of vernacular structure designed in the Greek Revival manner. The rectangular brick structure is distinguished by a symmetrical five-bay facade articulated by giant pilasters, a recessed central entrance framed by fluted Greek Doric columns in antis, and topped by a low gable roof trimmed with a wide denticulated entablature, punctuated at regular intervals by elaborate cast-iron grille openings.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The one-and-a-half story main block is rectangular with a one-story rear wing. The structure measures approximately 43' (symmetrical five-bay front) x 69'-6".

2. Foundation: A partially exposed stone foundation on the front and side elevations is terminated in a sill course. The remaining foundation walls are rough stone laid in ashlar courses.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Brick laid in common bond with headers every ninth course. The five-bay front facade is articulated by six full-length pilasters, defining each bay; both side facades are articulated by five pilasters defining the four bays. Clapboard siding covers the rear shed and part of the south porch.
4. Structural system, framing: Exterior walls are brick bearing walls, and stud bearing walls with wooden joists and rafters running north-south under the ridge line of the main block.
5. Porches, stoops: The central entrance is a recessed porch framed by fluted Greek Doric columns in antis which support a wide, plain entablature. The walls of the porch are stuccoed. The deck is stone and fronted by two concrete steps. The kitchen stoop has an open frame wood hood supported by brackets.
6. Chimneys: Four brick corner chimneys with corbelled caps rise tall above the roof surface. There is one interior chimney.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The central entry door has six molded panels in three tiers framed by a four-light transom and side-lights.
 - b. Windows: Openings in the main block are six-over-six double-hung sash windows trimmed with flush stone lintels and projecting stone sills. Windows on the rear wing are frame. Elaborate cast-iron entablature grilles conceal single-light windows and blind panels.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The house has been designed to minimize the roof pitch, appearing flat from the front. The main ridge runs north-south and is intersected on the east by a low-pitched shed roof. All surfaces are covered with mineral cap.
 - b. Cornices, eaves: The boxed cornice has surface moldings concealing metal gutters. A slightly pitched parapet frames each gable end, faced with asphalt shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: A full basement extends under the entire area of the main block and partially under the wing. Access is from a stair in the first-floor bathroom and an exterior bulkhead at the south side of the rear wing.
- b. First floor: Central hall plan, opening into a parlor on each side. A door opposite the main entrance opens into the dining room which in turn leads to the kitchen. Flanking the dining room are bedrooms, each of which is accessible from a parlor. An enclosed porch is to the south of the kitchen and a large bathroom is to the west.
- c. Second floor: A stair from the dining room leads up to a central hall, opening into a bath and two bedrooms at the rear. The front part is unfinished.

2. Stairways: A narrow enclosed single flight stair leads from the dining room to the second floor.

3. Flooring: Wooden plank flooring on the first and second floor rooms. Concrete is in the basement. The kitchen and first floor bathroom have sheet plastic flooring.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wall paper over plaster on the entry and dining room walls, with wooden wainscoting in the dining room and kitchen. Painted plaster on all other surfaces. The interior porch walls are brick.

5. Doorways and doors: The parlor and entry hall doors are six-paneled in three tiers. The six-paneled doors are framed by tapered pilasters with elaborate entablatures of a plain frieze and a projecting molded cornice. All wood is painted white.

6. Special decorative features: The south parlor has a paneled fireplace wall around an irregularly coursed masonry hearth. Squared tapered pilasters support a broad entablature and narrow mantel shelf which is carried across the wall. A built-in cabinet with glazed doors, tapered jambs and an entablature sits above the frieze line on the right. A secretary is concealed by two doors flush with the frieze.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: A warm air furnace heats the house.
- b. Lighting: Electrical wired fixtures.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house stands on a rural site, set slightly above the level of the road. Some of the surrounding acreage is used for farming.
2. Outbuildings: An old garage covered with clapboard siding and a hip roof stands north of the house. A more recent garage-shop with metal siding and a gable roof is further north, with a wooden ventilated stock building at the rear.

Prepared by Mort Karp
Project Supervisor
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1974

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. The project was completed in the summer of 1974 under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; and Associate Professor Mort Karp of the University of Arkansas, Project Supervisor; the Architect Harry Hunderman (University of Michigan); and student assistant architects Scott Barnard (University of Pennsylvania), Mark Hall (Pennsylvania State University), and Richard Perlmutter (Yale University); and architectural historian Robert Brueggmann (University of Pennsylvania) at the HABS Field Office, Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in January 1975. The written historical and architectural data was edited, and in some cases expanded upon, in the HABS Washington office in April 1979 by staff historian, Jan E. Cigliano.

ADDENDUM TO
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